

VZCZCXYZ0002  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIL #1930/01 2291121  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 171121Z AUG 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4405  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 9946  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 5620  
RUEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CCPA// IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1143  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 7697  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1694  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 001930

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)  
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: AUGUST 17, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke's Islamabad visit and his meetings with senior Pakistani leaders received extensive coverage. His vow to "help Pakistan overcome energy crisis" dominated headlines in all newspapers on Monday. Some dailies also reported that the "bad weather forced Holbrooke to defer his visit to Mingora (Swat)." Several major newspapers ran a NYT story that the "U.S. is setting up a new unit in the State Department to counter militant propaganda in Afghanistan and Pakistan." All newspapers highlighted reports that at least "17 Taliban were killed in factional fighting in South Waziristan."

Editorializing the latest suicide attack in Swat, the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn," observed that "a grim juxtaposition and a reminder, if one was needed, that the battle for the control of Swat is far from over." However, the Lahore-based liberal English language newspaper, "Daily Times," noted that "some residual activity of the Taliban may be disturbing but it is not as serious as other such problems in South Waziristan and Balochistan." Commenting on a statement attributed to Undersecretary Robert Black ruling out the possibility of civil nuclear deal with Pakistan, the second-largest Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt," advised that "we can strengthen our defense and economy by being self-reliant because the U.S. has not concealed the fact that it is India's friend." End Summary.

-----  
News Stories  
-----

"U.S. Vows Assistance To Ease Energy Crisis" "Dawn" (08/17)

"President Barack Obama's special representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan said in Islamabad on Sunday that the U.S. administration would cooperate with the country to help it to overcome the energy crisis. 'The U.S. understands Pakistan's energy requirements and needs. Therefore, energy-related issues will be focused more in Pakistan-U.S. relations in future, as they are moving towards economic ties,' Richard Holbrooke said at a press conference after talks with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi."

"Holbrooke Says Washington Impressed By Pak Successes Against Militants" "The News" (08/17)

".... Appreciating the success in the war against terror by Pakistani forces, Holbrooke said the U.S. would extend full assistance in the rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons of Swat, Malakand and other areas where Pakistani forces have

launched operation against the militants. He said the U.S. has been impressed by the success of Pakistani forces in the operation against the militants."

"Pakistan To Hunt Down Terrorist Wherever They are; U.S. Focusing On Pak Economy, Energy Sector" "Daily Times" (08/17)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi vowed on Sunday to eliminate terrorists from every part of the country, with the U.S. assuring Pakistan of its support in tackling challenges facing the country, including the energy crisis. Addressing a joint press conference after a meeting with U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke, Qureshi said both sides were in agreement that the Swat operation was a success, and 'the tide has turned against the Taliban.'"

"Holbrooke Sees Shift In Pakistan's Terror Policy" "Dawn" (08/17)

"Pakistan has been shifting its forces by historic proportions from its Indian border to the Afghan frontier, gaining ground against militants and giving the United States room to focus on economic problems threatening the South Asian country, according to the U.S. envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan. Richard Holbrooke told reporters travelling with him to Islamabad his current focus on economic and social issues, rather than security, reflected gains by the Pakistani military in the Swat and Buner valleys."

"Bad Weather Forces Holbrooke To Defer Visit To Mingora" "Daily Times" (08/17)

"U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke's visit to Mingora was postponed on Sunday because of bad weather. Holbrooke, who arrived in Islamabad on Saturday, was scheduled to visit Mingora for a briefing by the military and local officials."

"Distancing From Nawaz To Hamper U.S. Interests: Holbrooke" "The Nation" (08/17)

"Reuters and AFP news agencies quoted Holbrooke as saying that widening distance from Nawaz Sharif would hamper the interests of U.S., as he is a popular leader in Pakistan. The U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke assured the former Prime Minister that the U.S. viewed Pakistan as an extremely important country that deserved the help and assistance of the entire international community in its efforts to confront militancy and to strengthen the economy."

"It should Be Trade, Not Aid, Nawaz Tells U.S." "The News" (08/17)

"Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Sunday urged Washington to support Pakistan's efforts to finalize a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. and to encourage greater American investment in Pakistan, especially in its energy and power sectors, as these will have a direct bearing on the country's economy as well as on the people's well being. This was observed by Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with President Obama's Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke who called on the PML-N Quaid in Islamabad."

"U.S. Not To Hinder Musharraf's Trial" "The Post" (08/17)

"U.S. special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke during his meeting with PML-N Quaid Mian Nawaz Sharif in Punjab House, Islamabad has said Pervez Musharraf is history now and his country will not create any hurdle in Musharraf trial by Pakistani Parliament."

"U.S. To Fight Taliban With FM Radio, Cell Phones" "Daily Times" (08/17)

"The United States is setting up a new unit in the State Department to counter militant propaganda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the New York Times has reported."

"Showdown With Policeman: U.S. Embassy Official Sent Home" "Dawn" (08/17)

"The U.S. Embassy security officer who was involved in a showdown with a local police officer has returned home (United States) under

a compromise arrangements to defuse the tense situation, but short of being declared persona non grata, a senior security officer told 'Dawn.'

"Seventeen Taliban Killed In Factional Fighting" "Dawn" (08/17)

"At least 17 supporters of militant commander Maulvi Nazir were gunned down on Sunday allegedly by followers of Baitullah Mehsud in a South Waziristan area under the control of the outlawed Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan. Azam Tariq, spokesman for the TTP, however, said his group had nothing to do with the incident. Some local sources said the attack could have been the work of Uzbek militants."

"6 Terrorists Killed, 69 In Custody: ISPR" "Daily Times" (08/17)

"Six terrorists were killed, 52 apprehended and 17 surrendered to security forces and local lashkars in various parts of Swat and Malakand division as Operation Rah-e-Raast continued on Sunday."

"Tribesmen Vow To Support Govt. Against Militants" "The Nation" (08/17)

"Bhetanni tribesmen have reiterated their determination to support government's efforts to restore peace and eliminate militancy from the area (Lakki Marwat), an official source told on Sunday."

"Four Injured In Mingora Suicide Attack; 18 Bodies Found In Swat" "Dawn" (08/17)

"At least four soldiers were injured in a suicide attack on a check-post in the Naway Kallay area in Mingora on Sunday evening. Earlier, bodies of 18 militants were found in various areas of Swat and security forces killed six militants in a clash in Dehrai." "Lashkars On Outskirts Of Peshawar Fighting Fire With Fire" "Daily Times" (08/17)

"Local lashkars (Peshawar), brandishing cudgels and other weapons and patrolling the outskirts of the city, have been quite successful in restricting Taliban raids in rural areas - demonstrating considerable vitality and tact in successfully dealing with onslaughts."

"17 Arrested After Rocket Attacks On Kohat Cantt." "Dawn" (08/17)

"Five militants and 12 suspects were arrested on Sunday from western parts of the district following a rocket attack on the cantonment area, police said."

"Intelligence Reports Warn Of Possible TTP Retaliation" "Daily Times" (08/17)

"Intelligence agencies have warned that members of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) may launch a fresh series of suicide and terror attacks across the country to avenge the killing of former TTP chief Baitullah Mehsud."

"As Vote Nears, U.S. Raises The Stakes In War" "Daily Times" (08/17)

"Elections in Afghanistan come at a pivotal moment for the U.S.-led war effort as Washington pours troops and money into an increasingly ambitious mission with no end in sight. The vote serves in part as a test of U.S. strategy as thousands of troops have moved into the country's volatile south to try to bolster security in the face of rising violence from Taliban insurgents."

"Most Afghans See Karzai As Winnable Candidate: Survey" "Dawn" (08/17)

"Afghan President Hamid Karzai is most likely to continue to rule his war-ravaged country for next five years as the majority in Afghanistan sees him as a winnable, although not necessarily the best, candidate for Thursday's election."

-----  
Editorials/Op-eds  
-----

"Swat Suicide Attack," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (08/17)

"The day after the residents of Swat came out on the streets to celebrate Independence Day, a suicide bomber struck.... A grim juxtaposition and a reminder, if one was needed, that the battle for the control of Swat is far from over.... While the second and third-tier leadership is believed to have been dealt severe blows, the capacity for the militants to potentially reorganize themselves and launch a guerrilla war remains a grave danger as long as the top leaders of the TTP remain at large.... The contrast between the return of hope to Swat and the continuing problems with eliminating the militants could not be starker.... In Swat, mere rumors and governmental claims that Maulana Fazlullah is injured or worse will not do. The demands that the security forces 'do more' are not mere carping; 'do more' is essential to reclaiming Swat once and for all."

"Taliban Remnants In Malakand," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (08/17)

"Some residual activity of the Taliban may be disturbing but it is not as serious as other such problems in South Waziristan and Balochistan.... Yet this is not the point in the war against the Taliban where we should become smug about the return of the refugees to their homes and their willingness to mount vigilante action against the terrorists. More troop strength is needed to prevent the pockets of the Taliban from becoming more permanent than they are now. From the Taliban death toll, one can conclude that their over-all numerical strength is being depleted.... The people of Malakand cannot be abandoned once again to the savagery of the Taliban."

"Mass Murder?," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/17)

"A fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has come across reports from local people of mass graves in various parts of Swat. It is thought these graves in some cases at least contain the remains of Taliban militants killed by security forces. There have also been accounts of extra-judicial killings. There are those who argue that in the kind of situation that prevailed in Swat, such atrocities are unavoidable.... But there are many - including HRCP - who agree there were no options left."

"U.S. Refusal For Civil Nuclear Cooperation," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (08/17)

"In a television interview, U.S. Assistant Secretary for South Asia Robert Black has said that a civil nuclear deal with Pakistan is not possible, and Pakistan cannot sign such a deal with any major country.... We can strengthen our defense and economy by being self-reliant because the U.S. has not concealed the fact that it is India's friend. Since India is our arch-enemy, we should not expect any good from the U.S. either. Robert Black's statement is a link in the same chain."

"Thumbs Up Or Down?," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/17)

"A hefty 64 per cent regard the U.S. as an enemy, and only 9 per cent a partner. Despite this there is an openness to improving relations with the U.S. and considerable support for the idea of working with it to combat terrorism. By a margin of 53 per cent to 29 per cent Pakistanis say it is important that relations between the two countries improve. The gap remains wide, and American attempts to narrow the trust deficit are yet to see much by way of bearing fruit.... A poll is only a snapshot and within this glimpse of ourselves toleration and moderation seem elusive."

"After Baitullah's Death," an op-ed by Talat Masood in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/17)

"Clearly, Baitullah's demise is a major setback for the Taliban, but this by no means implies that the insurgency will soon disappear."

The social, political and ideological structure, as it exists today in FATA, favors the continuation of militancy.... There are nonetheless some favorable factors that need to be exploited. It will not be easy for the new Taliban leadership to consolidate power while facing military and economic pressure from Pakistan as well as NATO forces.... The media needs to be careful that it should not over-project the new leader as that would help him consolidate power. The foreign and local media either inadvertently or deliberately played a major role in building Baitullah's militant stature. It should not repeat the same mistake.... The situation changed after the Swat/Malakand operation when it became obvious to U.S. policy-makers that Pakistan was serious in combating terrorism."

"Presence Of 2,000 U.S. Troops In Islamabad," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (08/17)

"Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, PML-N member Rashid Akber Khan claimed that arrangements were being made for the deployment of 7,000 Marines at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, and added that 2,000 Marines had already reached Islamabad... According to some media reports, the U.S. is planning to turn its 30-acre diplomatic complex in Islamabad into a huge detention center, rivaling to the infamous Abu Gharib, the Guantanamo and the Bagram Jail, in the garb of security measures. All this is being done despite the fact that the Government of Pakistan has made foolproof security arrangements for the U.S. nationals throughout the country including Islamabad. It is an open secret that the U.S. poses more threat to the stability and security of Pakistan than the extremists. The U.S.-Israel-India troika is not only bent to destabilize Pakistan, but it may also prove extremely dangerous for the global peace. The incumbent government should clearly define rules of engagement with the United States, so that Pakistan's solidarity, independence and freedom are not compromised at any cost."

"NATO Troops' Dignity Lies In Withdrawal From Afghanistan," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (08/17)

"The biggest reality of this region is that U.S. and NATO troops should not stay in Afghanistan for a long period of time. It is imperative for world peace that the U.S. and other foreign troops and authorities give up their prejudiced attitude, and leave the country. This is the only solution to the Afghan issue."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Feierstein